ANSWERS TO THE OPPOSITION.

SPEECH

OF THE

HON. E. J. FLYNN

Delivered in the Legislative Assembly, at the sittings of the 8th, 13th and 16th May, 1884,

IN ANSWER TO REMARKS FROM THE OPPOSITION,

FOR HAVING VOTED, IN 1879, AGAINST THE JOLY GOVERNMENT.

(Extracts from the *Debats* published by Mr. Desjardins.)

(Translation from the French.)

QUEBEC.

1897

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The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
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In the Legislative Assembly.

Sitting of Tuesday, the 13th May, 1884.

(Continuation of the Debate on the Proposition of the Honorable Mr. Mercier on the Supplies for 1885.)

The order of the day was called for the discussion of the Hon. Mr. Mercier's motion on the general budget for the fiscal year 1885.

The Hon. Mr. Flynn, member for Gaspé, Commissioner of Railways, said :—I regret to be obliged to refute certain parts of the speech of the Honorable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mercier). I will say nothing personal, though he has shown himself very aggressive ever since the commencement of the Session.

The honorable member has not limited himself to criticising the administrations since 1867, and by concluding that the Conservative party had ruined the country, but he has shown a desire to attack me personally. I must say that I was surprised, for if there is a man in this arena who has no right to speak as he has done, it is the Honorable Leader of the Opposition.

Since he has gone back so far into the past, why, in speaking of the administrations since 1867, has he not spoken of the years from 1862 to 1867 ? Why has he not spoken to us of himself, from 1862 to 1867, and given us a page of his history ? We should not hear treason spoken

of by those who have not ceased to merit for themselves the name of traitor. I will return again to this part of my subject.

It is said that the Honorable Prime Minister has overthrown the Joly Government by having recourse to the Legislative Council. I deny the truth of this assertion.

What are the facts, Mr. Chairman? If the honorable member for Quebec East was here he would relate them as I am going to do.

The Joly Ministry has fallen victim to a series of uncontrolable events. In returning so often to the events of the past, others oblige me to do the same. They speak of treason. There has been none, for the Ministry in question fell under the weight of its inability to prevail against the events which have brought about its ruin. This is the only logical conclusion to which we can arrive after having examined things in their true light. Let us see what was the position of this Government according to the Journals of this House, and we shall soon arrive at the truth. Was the Government of the honorable member for Lotbinière a perfectly lively and healthy one even at his birth?

Although I assisted in the task of overcoming the obstacles that sprang up in its way, I owe it both to the cause of truth and to my own convictions to say that it was not born to last. The proof is found in the humiliation which it had to undergo in the address in reply to the speech from the throne at the Session of 1878.

Nevertheless, we supported it in order that we might see it at work, and to assure ourselves whether public sentiment would favor it. We have been the sad witnesses of an unheard of spectacle, that of seeing the Government, like an individual minister, censured by the majority. We have seen the Prime Minister going to present an address in which we read as follows:

" This House, while expressing its firm determination to insist on the strictest economy in all branches of public

service, and the severest inspection of all administrative expenses, regrets that the actual advisers of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor have persisted in remaining in power without being supported by the majority of the Legislative Assembly at the time of their entrance into office and without even yet having the support of this majority."

It was necessary to adopt a new paragraph with the assistance of the Speaker's vote in order to give a semblance of strength to the Cabinet thus censured. And what was said in this amendment? Here it is:

"Nevertheless, in these circumstances, this House believes it to be its duty to give a "general and independent support"—remark well these words—a "support" general and independent, to the Government, in order that the measures which it proposes may be submitted to the judgment of this House."

There is the engagement that I took jointly with my colleagues in 1878.

We have kept it, and we have surpassed its measure in order to give to this administration all possible opportunities of surmounting the obstacles in its path. And during all this Session of 1878 the Government was only kept in power by the vote of the Speaker!

At the following Session, in 1879, the Joly Government had two or three more votes than in 1878. But let us return to the Journals of the House and let us see what happened.

I say, that from the moment that Mr. Letellier was dismissed, his Cabinet was virtually if not constitutionally dead. It had only an ephemeral existence. The blow of 1879 simply put an end to the crisis.

According to my ideas a healthy Government is one which can always command a majority. If we refer to the Journals of the House we shall see that they sustain me in peaking thus.

Mr. Letellier was dismissed the 25th July, 1879 Immediately after this dismissal from office an incident happened which indicates the situation of the Government with regard to the House. The Hon. Mr. Chapleau had said with reference to an assertion made by Mr. Langelier, that it was not the first time that he had been convicted of having made false assertions, and that twice before he had been convicted of lying before the House. These words gave rise to an incident terminating by a proposition from the honorable member for Lotbinière, then Prime Minister, which reads as follows:—

"Seeing that the Hon. Mr. Chapleau, representing the Electoral Division of Terrebonne, has made use of an expression which he refuses to withdraw to the satisfaction of this House, although asked to do so by the Speaker, the said Mr. Chapleau be reprimanded in his place by the Speaker."

The vote was taken and three Ministerial members left the Government and gave the Opposition a majority. Among these names I see that of the honorable member for Quebec East (Mr. Shehyn).

The honorable member for Lotbinière so well understood the meaning of this vote that he at once asked for the adjournment of the sitting.

Hon. Mr. Irvine, then member for Megantic, next day proposed a vote of confidence in the Government in the following terms:—"That this House approves of the economical policy of the Government, and has perfect confidence thai it will continue to put this policy in practice, and that it will thereby succeed in avoiding the imposition of new taxes on the Province."

This was the means adopted to keep in power a tottering Government. I quote these facts to show that the Government was constitutionally dead before we voted against it on the 29th of October, 1879.

With regard to the Lake St. John Railway resolutions, the Government declared that it would withdraw them unless the Opposition undertook to support them, for its own friends refused to approve of them.

Hon. Mr. JOLY (member for Lotbinière)—"Yes, because those members of the Opposition who had promised to vote for them did not wish to do so."

Hon. Mr. FLYNN—"In any case the honorable member has admitted that he withdrew his resolutions for the reasons which I have given."

The events which followed in rapid succession proved that the Cabinet was losing its strength, and desertions from its ranks occurred every day.

On August 11th, 1879, Mr. Shehyn abandoned his friends over the Three Rivers loop line. The honorable member for Quebec East found it hard to leave the House because the populace were stirred up against him. It is always the same old system. Ever since 1879 the opposition has tried to prevent any manifestation of independence on the part the members of this House.

On August 21st, 1897, the Government had a consultation as to whether or not it should carry out the measures promised in the speech from the throne. The Municipal Loan Act was left aside, and so was the renting of the railway, because the friends of the Cabinet were against it, though it was the Government policy. The School Inspector question was not touched. What are we to think of such proofs of feebleness and want of power.

On August 28th the Legislative Council suspended the adoption of the Supply Bill. Harmony had to be re-established between the two branches of the Legislature.

We see upon the Orders of the Day a proposition to censure the Legislative Council, and another from Hon. Mr. Chapleau asking for the formation of a stronger Government. I myself spoke against Mr. Chapleau's motion and expressed the opinion that the Government could not be over-

turned by the Council. Moreover I voted for the motion, protesting against the action of the Upper House.

On September 2nd, a motion was made for the adjournment of the House until October 28th. What then was the position of the Government? It was no longer tenable. In fact we no longer had a Government in the full sense of the word.

On September 12th, 1879, Hon. Mr. Chauveau resigned his portfolio, and the Government then no longer had a majority. The Prime Minister himself declared so in the course of a debate on the formation of a new Government on October 28, 1879.

"In connection with this railway question, allow me to say that I did not hesitate about losing two votes out of a majority of four, which the Government had in the House, rather than do injustice to certain interested parties."

Here then was a Government which withdrew its measures, and which saw its members, as well as its majority leaving it. I was sent for to replace Hon. Mr. Chauveau, but I told the honorable member for Lotbinière that I could not accept the portfolio offered me. I told him also, at the time, that I was in favor of a conciliatory policy, and that the best thing to do was to extend the olive branch to his opponents, so as to end a struggle which was ruinous to the country's interests. At the same time I consulted my electors and asked them what I should do.

I had not been elected on a promise to support the Joly Government in any case, having reserved all possible latitude to myself in this respect, and when I returned from Gaspé, the situation had been still further modified by fresh circumstances. If you will read the *Morning Chronicle* of that time, you will find in it an account of an interview which I then had with my electors. They knew exactly what to rely upon. In another meeting of friends of the Government I was asked to make a motion censuring the action of the Legislative Council. I refused because, from

November 2nd, 1879, I said that I would vote for a motion having in view conciliation and truce upon mutually honorable grounds. Under the circumstances, I could not accept the offer of the honorable members for Lotbinière to the effect that I should enter his Cabinet, without dishonoring myself. When I supported him, I did so from motives of personal friendship. But when I hear it said that I did not act honorably, I at once brand the statement as a falsehood. When a portfolio was tendered me, the offer was accompanied by kind words, and I am therefore all the more justified in my astonishment at the stand taken since, and again to-day, by those who showered these kindly utterances upon me.

When I wrote to the honorable member for Lotbinière that I could not accept, he gave me in reply what was in reality—a certificate of good conduct. Here is his letter, as it appears on page 383 of the *Debats* by Mr. Desjardins for 1879.

"QUEBEC, October 17, 1879.

"E. J. FLYNN, Esq.:

"MY DEAR SIR,—I received last night your letter of the 14th October, informing me that you have come to the conclusion, not without a feeling of regret, not to accept a portfolio in the Government of which I am Leader. I regret your decision, but I have too much respect, as well for you as for myself, to insist. I notice with pleasure that you have understood that in making you the offer of a portfolio I did not seek only to fill up a vacancy in the Cabinet, but, above all, to secure the entry thereto of a man generally respected for his talents and his integrity, which would have done honor to the Cabinet. You have fulfilled your promise in frankly notifying me of your intentions with respect to the offer I made you of a portfolio.

"As for the line of conduct you will follow in the future, you inform me that you have no intention at present of

placing your future conduct in contradiction with your conduct in the past, but, at the same time, that you desire to reserve to yourself that liberty of appreciation and action necessary to every representative who wishes to act honestly and according to conviction in the interests of the country. Since I have been in power, my ambition has been to deserve the confidence of honest and intelligent men, and it is not I who will find fault with your views.

" Please accept, my dear sir, the assurance of my consideration.

Your devoted servant,

" H. G. Joly."

Now, I ask, what have I done, to deserve the calumnies which for five years have been gratuitously heaped upon me, and to call for this perpetual discussion of my actions? I hear stigmatism spoken of. Who here has the right to stigmatize? Is it the honorable members of the Opposition? Where did they get this right? In 1879, Mr. Speaker, I was elected by acclamation when I came before my electors after my entrance into the Chapleau administration. In 1881, all over the rest of the Province there was war to the knife against the Chapleau Government.

I was again reelected by acclamation.

Finally I was reelected last April by an overwhelming majority.

This time an effort was made to try their strength. A candidate was found and for a whole month I was subjected to every kind of annoyance. The most disgraceful means were employed against me, thousands of copies of a sheet which breathed out lies and calumny being circulated in my county. Notwithstanding all this I was reelected by a large majority. If these are stigmatisms, it is true I have been stigmatized three times, twice by the unanimity of my constituents and once by a great majority. I am right in saying that my position is better than that of my detractors. I do not need to defend myself when I receive such

evident marks of the confidence of my electors and of the country.

I was not a member of the preceding Cabinet, that of Mr. Mousseau, but people seemed to sympathise with me, and favored me with kind words. However, from the beginning of this Session, the Opposition has not ceased to attack me. Through this system of vile vituperation the Opposition will finally succeed in making me stronger than ever, for the people, who are just, will not be deceived by violence and calumny! Let my adversaries continue them, it is perhaps owing to their attacks that I occupy the position that I hold to-day.

———

Mr. Speaker, the Honorable Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Mercier) amuses himself by attacking all Conservative Governments. Perhaps he is preparing scourges for the hands of those whom he is to-day stirring up against me. In three or four years he may possibly be seated among the Conservatives. He has always been a Conservative.

No one has more reviled the Rouges than he.

If we open the paper which he edited from 1862 till 1867, we shall see fine examples of this. His whole life in fact has been due succession of contradictions. Still I do not wish either to judge him, or to have him judged, by the statements of his oppenents. No, it will do better, for the Honorable Leader of the Opposition has written his history with his own hand. When one sees the honorable member for Lotbinière applaud him, the mind cannot but revert to the parable of the Wolf and the Lamb.

When the honorable member for St. Hyacinthe was pouring out thunderings in his paper against certain men, the representative of Lotbinière was defending these very persons against his attacks. If these men were so unpopular they owe it to the honorable member for St. Hyacinthe. As

chief editor of the *Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe* he had to bear the responsibility of that sheet's utterances. He wrote against the Letellier's, the Laframboise's, the Huntington's, the Sicotte's, and all the other political men who were the pride of the Liberal party.

If I were to base an opinion of the Honorable Leader of the Opposition upon the sayings of the *Pays* and of the *Journal de Saint-Hyacinthe*, edited by the Liberals, I should form a very unfavorable idea of him, but I would be doing him an injustice. I will hold to my intention of putting before this House only facts the authenticity of which cannot be denied.

In 1862 the honorable member for St. Hyacinthe came out as a very pronounced Conservative. I have carefully studied the documents concerning these facts and know whereof I speak. He continued to defend this party until 1864, and in 1866 he returned to it.

But in 1872, this ardent Conservative went down to the county of Rouville, *to oppose the Conservative* party, and was elected by a slender majority. Whilst his former chief, Sir George Cartier, was making a terrible fight against Mr. Jetté, he contributed as much as lay in his power to the defeat of him for whom he formerly had but fulsome adulation.

From 1866 till 1872, the honorable member had betrayed his party and his leaders. He who had everywhere defended Cartier, joined himself to his most bitter enemies in order to have him defeated by those whom he himself had ridiculed, despised and held up to public contempt. It was when Cartier was at the highest pitch of a frightful fight, that he cowardly struck him and worked for his defeat.

In 1874, Rouville sent him back to his law practice. In 1878, he tempted fortune in St. Hyacinthe, but was defeated. In 1879, he was again a candidate after the death of Mr. Bachand, and this time succeeded, thanks to the fact

that he was a Minister. No one knew his history, as for me, well I thought that he had never changed his party!

In 1879, he thought as I did on the political situation. In 1881, he did not wish to be a candidate, thereby cutting himself off from the fate of the party, or of the convictions which he defends with the zeal of a neophyte. In order to persuade him it was necessary to give him what he himself termed *carte blanche*. He was then in favor of the abolition of the Legislative Assembly, and declared for it with such force that I was moved by his words.

He still held out his hand to his enemies, though proving that he had yet a *Conservative* heart. When they saw this, the Liberals, fearing some new defection, nailed his flag to the Liberal mast, if I may make use of a phrase which will express my thought. From that time on he opposed his friends and his party. The fact is that I even had some sympathy for him. We all know the position of the member for St. Hyacinthe as regards Senator Rosaire Thibaudeau, and some other Liberal chiefs in Montreal. I do not think that anyone but he would have endured so much. Things finally came to such a pass that he had to say :— "You must choose between me and those who pose as Radicals."

On the 25th of January, 1883, he wrote to his friend Mr. Poirier :—"The Liberals have to choose between one of the leaders, and a few who pose as Radicals,—the worst enemies that the Liberals have in any country."

And, on the third of June, 1883, he addressed to Messrs. Aurélien Cauchon and others a letter in which he said :—

"My enemies are going to make a movement against me at the Club National to-morrow evening (Tuesday). They must be crushed. Would you be kind enough to lend a helping hand in having all my friends present? We must wipe out this *La Patrie* clique if we wish to do anything."

Yours,

HONORÉ MERCIER.

"This clique," which he wishes "to crush," consisted of Messrs. Thibaudeau, Beaugrand, and other Liberal leaders. It is not at all astonishing that they wanted none of him if they still remembered the fight he made against them from 1862 till 1866.

At six o'clock the House adjourned until eight o'clock.

Mr. Speaker, at six o'clock I was discussing the conduct of the Honorable Leader of the Opposition concerning myself. An attacked party has always the right to defend himself, especially when his defence offers as many advantages as mine does, and Voltaire has said, "Lie, Lie, some trace of it will always remain." It is evident that this diabolical maxim has been put into practice at my expense. I have long kept silence, but there are times when one can no longer allow to pass unanswered accusations which are meant for one's friends and the party which he supports.

As I have already stated, I do not wish to go outside of the field furnished by the Documents and the Journal of this House.

The stories of the different administrations which have been in power since 1867, and especially that of the Chapleau Government, have been told, and an effort has been made to bring up my conduct of 1879. That occurred five years ago, and yet it is daily recalled as if it were the present. In England such a system has nevet been seen. Here some men seem to think that they have achieved something great if they continually re-invoke the same subject. It is unfortunate that they allow themselves this doubtful pleasure.

The Honorable Leader of the Opposition should have been the last to attack me since he has suffered so much from the persecutions of his own friends. His authority as leader has even been questioned. I have never been able to resist

comparing his conduct with my own, and the result of this comparison is that I have come to the conclusion that the honorable member for St. Hyacinthe does not occupy his proper position in this Province. He will discover, if he has not indeed already done so, that he is in company with men who hold very different opinions from his own.

I do not desire to tire this House, but it is good and proper that we should reply to attacks directed against us. He has attacked me, and it is only fair that beside the attack he found the defence.

The honorable member for St. Hyacinthe has written many excellent things in favor of the Conservative cause. How then has the gold turned to vile lead? There was a time when the Conservative Standard was in his eyes the national flag, under the shadow of which he wished to fight and which he desired to ever defend.

To repel these attacks I will not make use of the accusations of his friends or of his adversaries of the past. No, Mr. Speaker, read the *Pays* and you will see the opinions of those who are now his friends. In 1866 the Leader of the Opposition made a confession of faith such as I have never seen.

Here it is, taken from the *Courrier de St-Hyacinthe :*

To the readers of the *Courrier de St-Hyacinthe :*

" It is needless to say that the principles which will direct the collaboration, and inspire the editorial department of the *Courrier* under the new *régime* upon which it now enters, will be those of Conservatism, as understood by the Catholic school, in the Old World as in the New "...

The Conservative principles have stood the test and received the sanction of centuries; they are at once the guarantee of power and the safeguard of liberty, the strength of the law and the protection of nationalities. Their flag is that of conscience and of duty; their school is that of patriotism and religion."

There is quite a Conservative programme, and it is the present Chief of the Liberal party who wrote it. His

friends should ask themselves what their position towards him is. He it is who contributed more than anyone else to depreciate the men who were the natural chiefs of their party, even the great Letellier, whose memory he told us was avenged. It is he who was, up to 1872, the greatest enemy of this man who he to-day lauds to the skies. And what has he not said against the Hon. Mr. Laframbroise?

Here is a specimen:—

"By becoming a member of the Macdonald-Dorion administration Mr. Laframbroise makes himself jointly and severally responsible for the acts and politics of his colleagues; by accepting this portfolio he endorses the position of the Government in Lower Canada, and becomes responsible therefor like the other ministers. This means that Mr. Laframbroise has betrayed Lower Canada, and has trampled underfoot the interests of his compatriots, and of his country, for a $5,000 portfolio.

In 1866, when he was suspected of shiftiness in politics, he was asked for a profession of faith in order to satisfy the Conservatives, and the honorable member wrote the following:

It is dated April 26th, 1866:

"The Conservative principles have stood the test and received the sanction of centuries; they are at once the guarantee of power and the safeguard of liberty, the strength of the law and the protection of nationalities. Their flag is that of conscience and of duty, their school is that of patriotism and religion."

"The management of the *Courrier* expressed itself as above two months ago when it took charge of this paper. It may and should express itself in the same manner to-day.....

"The French Canadian population is and should remain Conservative; the Conservative element rules and must be kept in power; Conservative principles make us a moral and honest people; let us hold to this double qualification

of respectability which has gained for us so many flattering but just opinions.

" Providence seems to have placed the realization of our great destinies in the retention of the healthy conceptions which have up to the present time inspired all our important political acts, which have given us strength and courage in the great days of misfortune, whose memory is consigned to our historical annals, and which has guaranteed to us the victory of a nationality which has gained immortality and not death in the struggle.

" The Conservative spirit will make us a distinct people, and the principles which it protects and defends, by giving us strength, will maintain us in the possession of those institutions which are the best and perhaps the only guarantee of our nationality.

" We should all work for the practical extension of this great Conservative idea, for the increase of its moral force and for the sure propagation of the principle which it protects. It can save our nationality in the days of those storms and tempests which gather on the horizon. It is by patriotism and intelligence that nationalities are sustained, live and prosper ; and the Conservative principles have always sheltered these two great agents which enlighten and save nations.

This article he finished as follows :

" For ourselves, come what may, we will always be faithful to these principles ; we will defend them with firm independence ; their flag will continue to be ours as it has been in the past ; it will serve as our guide, and the idea placed in the shade of its protection will be our inspiration.....

" All that we have written previous to to-day has meant nothing else than this, and our friends should attach no other meaning to our words."

On April 28th, 1866, he added :—

" We have confidence in the leaders of the Conservative party, and it is with pleasure that we believe the fears of the *Canadien* to be groundless, and it will itself perceive that it has given a premature alarm."

Thus, in order that the conscience of his Conservative friends should not be troubled, he gave a most categorical profession of faith. Is he capable of finding a single word contradictory to what I have said up to-day ? When I came forward in Gaspé I said that I was against the *rouge* party, which had at its head Dorion and the other chiefs then in the political arena, and that I wanted to be free if elected. When I received the mandate of the electors of Gaspé, and came here to do my duty, I was free, as I declared I should be. I helped the Joly Government to overcome obstacles in its way, but I did not sacrifice a single principle. Can the Leader of the Opposition say as much ? No, for we find a flagrant contradiction between his conduct at the beginning of his career, and his conduct of to-day. He approves what he has condemned, and condemns what he has approved. He does exactly what he found fault with in others, and what he then found tyrannical and unjust, he now employs against those who do not please him. He makes use of arms which he once rejected. As a proof of this, I quote the following lines from the same paper, under the date of April 8th, 1866 :—

" In their eyes the greatest crime of which a man can be guilty is that of not thinking as they do, and the greatest error into which he can fall is that of believing them on the wrong road, and thinking them capable of a false appreciation, or an error of judgment.

" You are their enemy from the day when you cease to think as they do, and a traitor from the moment when you free yourself from the yoke they would impose upon you When you are daring enough to tell them that they are mistaken, they take you for an imbecile or maniac ; when

you tell them that they are mad fanatics, they pray Heaven to pardon you; for you know not what you say.

" These men have hardly any opinions and still less convictions ; they have only prejudice. In the ministers they can see but traitors, and in the members of the opposing party only ambitious creatures. Injury is their favorite arm, squabbling their desire, and hatred their happiness."

In 1864 he wrote :

" The triumph of the Conservative party will be a grand and magnificent one, for it will be the triumph of the country and of its interests. The triumph of truth is right ; the triumph of a holy cause is just.

The Glorious Standard, the National Standard, under the shadow of which the Conservative leaders have fought, and still do fight with such a degree of glory for themselves and of success for the country at large, this flag under the shadow of which we are happy to fight, arises more glorious than ever ; to-day this standard is a guide ; in our eyes it is the standard of the country, the standard of great ideas, protecting hallowed doctrines under its shade and bearing in its folds the country's hope.

" Yesterday the country had no Government ; to-day it has men of talent at its head, they should be supported."

And since he took the leadership of the party, which he so strongly condemned, how has he been treated ? At one time it is the young men of the Club National who attack him, at others even the Montreal leaders conduct the attack.

In May, 1883, the Reform Club discussed a motion to censure the members of the House for having chosen him as leader of the Opposition, and Mr. Trenholm made a violent speech against his leader.

In January, 1883, during the contest in Jacques-Cartier, he declared that he would never abandon it. We all know what happened. And what did the Montreal *Witness* not say about the member for Saint-Hyacinthe ? This paper did not accept him as leader.

As a matter of fact how could any convinced Liberal accept him, after what he had done against their party, and especially seeing that quite recently he was ready to extend the olive branch to the Conservatives. From 1882 until 1883 he worked in this direction. Certain Liberal papers, devoted to the member for St. Hyacinthe, said a good deal on this subject, and I may be permitted to read an article taken from L'*Electeur* of December 14th, 1882. This article was written by a politician and inspired by an important personage. In it we find that in the eyes of L'*Electeur* there is no difference of opinion between the two parties.

THE COALITION.

"This is a word so often uttered, not only for a short time past, but we may even say for three years back, that people may have been surprised not to hear L'*Electeur* mention the subject to which it refers.

"The reason of our silence is that the question has never been placed in a practical manner before the public; never, so far as we are aware, has one side or the other made a formal proposition of alliance. There have been overtures between the political men of the two parties, but never with a view to an immediate or even near result. Each party may have discussed the matter, but more in a theoretical than in a practical manner. In each of the two parties a faction favored an alliance between the moderate elements of both sides of the House, and a faction was opposed to any such action.

"We may add that until very recently the subject was mentioned in the press in general only as a rumor, or yarn. No one considered it to have been placed positively enough before the public to be the subject of articles in the serious journals.

"But to-day it is no longer so, every newspapers have taken up the matter and discussed it for some time. In fact the question became so important that a serious paper

like the *Witness* devoted a leading editorial to it. It is time then that we place it before our readers. We will be the more at ease in doing so, from the fact that there is not any prospect of coalition at the present moment; for it is admitted that Mr. Mousseau will come before the House with his Government as it is at present constituted.

" Before going any further let us establish one fact, viz., that neither in the press nor in conversation has there been any question of a coalition in the true sense of the word.

" What is a true coalition? It is an alliance between men of different political opinions, at the mutual sacrifice of their principles, as a means of coming to power. Such an alliance is not to be thought of or discussed. It is always immoral and prejudicial to the country's interests.

" But it is not of an alliance of this kind that we wished to speak when we made use of the word ' coalition ' but rather of a *union between two groups of men represented, let us say by Mr. Mercier on the Liberal side and Mr. Chapleau on the Conservative side*. Now, in forming an alliance, these men would make no sacrifice of principle. They are completely in accord on fundamental questions. Mr. Chapleau and his group are as Liberal as Mr. Mercier with regard to reforms to be instituted, in the Democratic sense, in our electoral laws, in our civil laws, and in the organization of the civil service. Mr. Mercier is as Conservative as Mr. Chapleau on the great social and religious problems, and on the relations between Church and State.

" And it is incontestable that the ideas of Messrs. Mercier and Chapleau are those of the great mass of their respective parties and of all reasonable and moderate men.

" There is in each party a small faction of Radicals represented among us by the *Witness*, and among the Conservatives by the *Journal des Trois-Rivières*, who do not go with the crowd. In the eyes of our respectable *confrère*, the *Witness*, to be a true Liberal one would have to be a Protestant and declare war against the Catholic Church. Ac-

cording to the *Journal des Trois-Rivières* no one can be a Conservative unless a more Catholic than the Pope.

" We do not wish, at the moment, to call in question the good faith of these two papers and of the handfull of men who share their ideas, but we can say, without fear of contradiction by those who know the country, that their ideas are not those of the great bulk of our population.

" If they are not divided by question of principle, what does divide the great mass of Liberals and most Conservatives ? When these are not names avoid of sense and without meaning, they signify only personal questions, individual antipathies, habits of discipline and at most methods of administration. One person is called a Conservative because he fougth with Mr. Chapleau, a follower of Sir George Cartier, who was allied to the Canadian Tories. Another is called a Liberal because he belonged to the school of Sir A. A. Dorion, who never separated himself from Mr. L. J. Papineau. The men, the questions, the ideas, everything has changed since but it signifies nothing.

" The political heirs of Mr. Cartier have accepted the greater part of the programme of the old Liberal party, such as the secret ballot, the elections on one set day, the extension of the suffrage, election contests before the courts, the abolition of seigniorial rights, the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, etc., but they continue to call themselves Conservatives. The followers of Mr. Dorion renounce a great part of the old Liberal platform. They no longer speak of annexation; they do not want elections of judges, nor universal suffrage ; they are against the abolition of tithes ; they are in favor of the maintenance of the rights of the Clergy. All this, however, makes no difference, they continue to call themselves Liberals, and in some quarters they are taken for Clemenceau's and Bradlaugh's. A man is termed a Conservative although he wishes to retain nothing opposed to reasonable progress, and another is called a Liberal even though he wishes to do away with nothing that may reasonably be retained.

Let us not then be deceived by the niceties of words, and let us admit *that no question of principle, none of these fundamental ideas, on which there is no possible compromise, separate the great masses of Liberals and Conservatives.*

" Should they continue to turn their backs on each other, because they have not always borne the same name? Should they remain eternally divided because they have not always been alike? Should they fight everlastingly because they have marched under differently colored banners?

No, most assuredly not; it would be neither reasonable, moral, or advantageous for the country. It would be contrary to all historical precedents. On all sides we have seen parties vanish and melt away when their distinctive existence was not justified by divisions determined by principle. We are witnessing a spectale of this kind in the United States. The honest and moderate men of both parties, agreeing on the great principles of politics, have come to an understanding to send to power, regardless of political party names, those men who share their common views.

" Should the alliance together of men be impossible simply because they have not always walked side by side and have even opposed each other? Such a supposition is absurd. *Of what advantage would discussion be if one did not hope to gain over his opponents*? And how could any one hope to gain them over if they were necessarily to be sent off again?

" No one has ever seen true politicians, with ideas sufficiently large to deserve command of their party, acting so foolishly. To confine ourselves to our own country, did we not see Mr. Mackenzie take into his Cabinet Mr. Cartwright, a former Tory of the school of Sir Allan McNab, and Messrs. Smith and Burpee, Conservatives and followers of Sir John A. Macdonal?

" Even in this Province, Mr. Irvine, a former Tory, has been seen to join himself to the Liberals to fight those who

called themselves Conservatives. If we have the advantage of his great talents and cleverness, every one will admit that it was not at the expense of his principles. His ideas had become those of Mr. Joly, although he had been up till then in the opposing ranks ; on the first occasion, when he could honorably do so, Mr. Irvine freed himself of his party and came with us, not by changing his principles, but by taking new political allies.

" When Mr. Joly was called by Mr. Letellier to form a Cabinet, he offered portfolios to Messrs. Turcotte and Mathieu. Does anyone think that he could have done so had he believed that he was acting dishonorably ?

" It is enough to ask the question to secure the negative answer of all who know him, friends and foes alike. Every one knows that he would never entertain the idea of taking as colleagues men who would have to commit a reprehensible if not dishonorable act in becoming his fellow-workers.

" He asked Mr. Turcotte, because he knew that, although a Conservative and nominally his enemy, the member for Three Rivers shared his political views. It was for the same reason that later on he had no objection to offering him the post of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

(Extract from *l'Electeur* of December 15th, 1882.—Continued from preceding article.)

If now we look upon the matter from the standpoint of the interests of the Province, how should we regard an alliance between the parties ? In order to answer this question, let us ask what would have happened if the coalition had taken place when first spoken of. There was some question of it in 1879 between the refusal of the Supply Bill by the Legislative Council and fall of the Joly administration ; and it was again mentioned between the session of 1881 and the general elections.

" What would have happened if the coalition had taken place in 1879 ? It is too evident to be denied that the Liberals would have had the preponderance. There would no longer have been any question of putting Mr. Sénécal at the head of the North Shore Railway. The French loan would have been avoided, and we should have succeeded in establishing equilibrium in the budget.....

" We are the more at ease in speaking thus, because personally we were not in favor of an alliance with our opponents. Allowing ourselves to be swayed by our personal dislikes, we preferred to see the Province suffer a little rather than sacrifice our antipathies.

" Parties are excellent things ; they are one of the most efficient guarantees of a good public administration, but on condition that they do not allow party interests to predominate over those of the public

" If our contemporary (*The Witness*) understood our party, it would perceive that the great majority of our friends are disgusted with the incessant and resultless strife of recent years; it would see that all those who, like Messrs. Mercier and Langelier, have for so many years borne the brunt of the fight, who have taken part in all these battles, and who have fought out the elections from one end of the Province to another ; it would find that all these are favorable to an alliance, or disgusted with politics, they do not wish to recommence the work of Sisyphus, which they have so long carried on. Those who are forever talking of war against the Conservatives are precisely those who have never done anything against them, except in committee of themselves, over a glass of wine and a cigar. They are those warriors of the House who quietly attend to their own business or sleep comfortably in bed at home, while those whom they upbraid for favoring coalition were traversing the length and breadth of the counties, braving the rain, the snow and the cold, ruining their health and their fortunes to forward the success of the Liberal candidates.

" How many Liberals should we see in the House if we had in the party none but these men of ferocious language ? How much would there be to-day remaining of Liberal ideas, if these men, to-day so fierce in proclaiming them, had been the only ones to defend them ? "

Hon. Mr. JOLY.—The Honorable Minister should remember the incident provoked by the honorable member for Montmorency last year, as a result of which the latter had to acknowledge that he had been led into error by false information. I presume that the Honorable Leader of the Opposition has settled this matter to his advantage.

Hon. Mr. FLYNN.—But since then new revelations have been made. We find at the end of the *Débats* for 1883, many documents which throw new light upon this question.

When the honorable member for Lotbinière saw that his successor in the leadership of the Liberal party was upon all sides attacked by Radicalism, to use the expression made use of by the member for St. Hyacinthe, he tried to come to his assistance, and although he had never shared the latter's views on coalition, he asked *La Patrie* to discontinue its attacks against the new Liberal Leader. He therefore wrote the following letter :

" Mr. A. H. Beaugrand, Editor-Proprietor of *La Patrie*,

Quebec, January 4th, 1884.

" Dear Sir,

" I am going to ask you to go no further in the discussion commenced on the subject of Hon. Mr. Mercier and coalition.

" I have no right to dictate any line of conduct to you, but this is a request I address to you.

" Do not let us follow the deplorable example of the Conservative party, which does not seem to realize that the blows which it aims at its leader recoil on its own head.

" What a triumph it would be for our opponents, and what balm to their wounds, what a blow for the Province which would then be in a position to include us all, Liberals and Conservatives, in the same condemnation!

" I am opposed to coalition, but I am not ready to condemn those of my friends who consider it the last and only remedy. Being content to await the day when the people will open their eyes and recognize their true friends, I do not blame those who have not my confidence in the future.

" But will this day ever come? Shall I ever see it? Sometimes I doubt if I shall, but others will see it. I do not blame those of my friends who are tired of their powerlessness to do good and prevent harm, for it is a very hard position for men of heart. If they can find a way of escape, let them follow it. But, let the road be an upright one, and may they always remain worthy of their past.

" I have the honor to be,

" Your obedient servant,

" (Signed) H. G. Joly."

The member for Lotbinière sometimes doubts if the people will ever support the Liberal party. This is not the first time he has made this avowal. In 1881, he said : " I do not wish to be told, you are too honest to be the leader of the party. When a leader of a party speaks in that way, it is a proof that something is wrong, for he insinuates that he lost power because he was too honest! These are so many official declarations of which we can make use when we attack the other side of the House.

In 1881, the member for Lotbinière said so before a great meeting held in the Mechanics' Hall, Montreal. He was addressing his friends and not his enemies. I will quote an extract from the *Herald* of November 18th, 1881 :

" So that when he was introduced as Leader of the Liberal party, he said he would explain these matters, and after

they had heard these explanations—after the Province had heard them—they would then have to choose whether he should be Leader or not (loud applause). If there was one reproach that he had received as a Leader, it was that he had tried to govern the country too honestly (cheers). He was proud of that. There was not one kind of honesty in private matters and another kind of honesty in politics; there ought to be the same kind of honesty in one as in the other (applause). But he must frankly tell them that these things, he was not going to have if he was going to be Leader. He was not going to be buttonholed on the street and told that he was too honest; he was not going to stand that. There was not one present who did not approve of honesty; and they must carry in politics the same feeling as they did in private affairs. But he might be told: "Look what your opponents are doing?" There was no use of there being two parties, if both of them governed the same way (applause). And if he was to be the Leader of the party, he would request his friends to carry with them in political life the same honour and honesty that characterized their private lives."

If that is not a severe criticism of the conduct of his party, I do not understand English.

I have finished with this question of coalition, and only wish to have you remark how unjust, in the face of those documents, is the conduct of men who condemn others for doing in 1879 what they themselves wished to do in 1882. Let the Honorable Chief of the Opposition settle up his affairs in Terrebonne and in Jacques-Cartier. Let him also square up his debate with *La Minerve*, but let him not pose as a model of political constancy, for no one will take him seriously.

In 1882, when we were discussing the sale of the North Shore Railway, which he now finds so odious, he voted against a proposition made by the member for Kamouraska, and when there was a question of the contract for the Eastern portion, he was conspicuous by his absence.

I will conclude my remarks with a last quotation concerning this Leader without followers !

The Hon. Mr. Laflamme, who belonged to the Radical faction of the Liberal party, said in March 1884, in a letter addressed to *La Patrie* concerning the choice of a candidate in Jacques-Cartier :

" Thus Mr. Mercier arrogates to himself the right of imposing the candidature of Mr. Descarries upon the electors, whether acceptable to them or not, so long as he decides that it shall be so. As Leader of the party such is his pretention.

" I do not so understand the *rôle* of the Leader of a popular party, and still less so that of the Leader of the Liberal party.

" It may suit Mr. Mercier to make secret arrangements and alliances, which he calls honest, with the Conservative party, in order to gain power, and that is easily understood ; but for him to impose a confession of faith in his principles upon the Liberal party, and for him to interdict all expression of opinion unfavorable to his Conservative *portégé*, is impossible, and I am very greatly mistaken if he can have this system adopted by the Liberals of Jacques-Cartier County, and by the Liberal party."

I never saw anything like this ! Here is a Leader of a party who choses a candidate, and his followers say : " we don't want him."

The Leader of the Opposition thought to conciliate those who aped Radicalism by concessions, but the old grudge remained, and experience should have shown him that he did wrong in appealing to the old Liberal leaders. His concessions like his troubles were thrown away.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I have dealt at great enough length with the policy of the Chapleau administration to show that it is of a nature to be more advantageous to the financial standing of the Province than any others.

I next answered and disposed of the numerous attacks which have been directed against me for the last five years. I hope that the House saw the justice of my defence.

On the other hand, the digression which I had to make proved to the House that the Honorable Leader of the Opposition, who parades himself as a great Liberal, was for many years, and during a great part of his career, an ardent and convinced Conservative, as he himself expressed it! He even made a most ardent conservative confession of faith in 1866.

Mr. Speaker, I will say no more. I believed it my duty to declare the Government's policy, and I have refuted the accusations brought against me, accusations which, perhaps, even jarred upon my colleagues to a certain degree. I trust that I have not infringed upon parliamentary rules in treating of so delicate a subject. My enemies and opponents may avail themselves of other means than those which I have used. An attempt has been made to ruin me politically by blackening my character, but it will not succeed. The Government has a policy which is the only true and wise one,—that of causing what is good to succeed and the right to triumph. I will conclude by repeating the words which I have already quoted as written by the member for St. Hyacinthe :

"The triumph of the Conservative party will be a great and grand one, because it will be the triumph of the country and of its interests. The triumph of truth is right; the triumph of a holy cause is justice.

" The glorious standard, the national standard, under the shadow of which the Leaders of the Conservative party have fought and still do fight with so much glory to themselves and so much success for the country, this flag under which we are all happy to fight, rises more glorious than ever; to-day this standard is a guide; in our eyes it is the standard of the country; the flag of great ideas, protecting

hallowed doctrines in its shade, and bearing in its folds the hope of the country.

"Yesterday the country was without a Government; to-day it has men of talent at its head; they should be supported."

Hon. Mr. FLYNN, member for Gaspé, Commissioner of Railways:—Mr. Speaker, in order to defend my honor and the Government, I have had to leave the limits within which usually one should keep one's self. I had to repel venemous attacks directed against me. I declared that I did not wish to make use of arms drawn from private life. I said to the Leader of the Opposition, you have written your history with your own hand. I did not so far forget myself as to make use of newspaper attacks such as public men are subject to. I might have quoted the saying of opponents of the Leader of the Opposition, but out of respect for the dignity of the House, I refrained from doing so. I said that I did not wish to use any arms but those with which he himself had furnished me, and in conclusion I stated that I had not exceeded the bounds within which I should keep.

Far from attacking the honorable member for Lotbinière, I spoke sympathetically of him. I said that I had supported him out of personal sympathy. I said, moreover, that injustice had been done me, and that when people mentioned treason they tried to use an unfair means. I also said that the Joly Government had fallen by reason of its own mistakes. Must we then always imagine that a man acts from servile motives? Have I no honor to defend? Am I not here representing a county?

I deny the right of the Leader of the Opposition to judge me. This system is a shameful prostitution of the English constitution. There is only one man in England who has been made the object of so many attacks as I for changing his party, viz., Lord Beaconsfield. I might also speak of the great Gladstone.

The members of the Opposition speak like men who do not know a work of the English Constitution.

Are we obliged to always have but one opinion ?

In that case you would create perpetual Governments ! Of what use would popular favor be with this system ? No English statesman ever fears to express his opinions.

When the great Gladstone made his *début* was it not said of him that he was "*the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories ?*"

To-day my enemies regret that I left them ; I do not regret it. I have now proof positive that I had a thousand reasons for leaving their ranks.

Have not Lord Chatham, Fox, and ever so many others changed their opinions ? Has not Lord Derby quite recently furnished a striking example for political men ?

Does the electorate also change ? It is public opinion which rules our country.

I charge my opponents with having inaugurated a system of political tyranny, under which no one can change his ideas without being taxed with treason.

Where did this expression come from ? The real traitors are those who have betrayed their country's interests. I am ready to recognize the saying : "The interests of one's country with, but not before, those of his party." In 1879, I said that I could no longer support you; I could not change my convictions; I was against the then existing state of affairs. I declined a portfolio in order to adhere to my opinions. I went down to my county to consult my electors, who were my natural judges. Therefore I deny the right of the Opposition to judge me. Moreover, this question has been settled for the third or fourth time.

Why return to it and stir up prejudice against me ? I will tell you. Two months ago I was in the quiet of my home. It was there that I was honored more than perhaps any member of this House. I was, I say, in the quiet of my home, when the Hon. Mr. Ross called me to form part of his Government. If I had considered my own feelings,

I would not have consented. Although I was putting my life in danger in undertaking a campaign in my county at that time of the year, for even before I had accepted, persons swore before witnesses, that if I entered the Government, I would not be elected, whatever means had to be taken to prevent it. Although all this was the case, I did not let it enter into my calculations. When my friends no longer want me, I will return home without regret.

I accepted, and a conspiracy was formed against me from one end of the county to the other. A system of lies and cowardly practices was instituted against me. Notwithstanding all this, these people suffered a defeat such as has not been known in the country.

When leaving the county they said enough to incriminate themselves, and one of them swore that he would avenge himself upon me, and that before witnesses. Since then they have been seen speaking to members of this House and trying to engage their assistance in this work of revenge. Hatred carried them so far that one of them even insulted me. I will leave to the public the task of judging the reasons of their actions. In view of their conduct, the thought occurred to me that justice was not made for me, since my opponents could heap calumnies upon me as they had done, with impunity. They seemed to deny me the right of defending myself. Did not the Leader of the Opposition go so far as to say that I did not deserve the esteem of my friends? An attempt was even made to turn my friend, the Honorable the Commissioner of Crown Lands, against me.

The members for Kamouraska and for Montreal West have had a rôle assigned to them; let them fulfil it. I regretted at first that I was not here the other evening, but when I heard that it was they who had spoken, I thought to myself that it was not worth the trouble of a regret. When it was the member for St. Hyacinthe, or the member for Lotbinière who spoke, I was present, not because they

were any politer, but because they have played a part important enough to justify the trouble. This proves that I did not lack courage.

They have laid down a strange doctrine. A man on their side can change his opinions or his party without the slightest inconvenience, but we are refused the exercise of the same right.

Whoever attempts to make use of it becomes a mark for them to destroy, and they declare that they are quite justified in ruining him. We have the right, they say, to heap injuries upon him; we will ruin him as a minister. My opponents have not only counted upon my personal and physical destruction to succeed. I even read in a newspaper of this city that if I had opposition in my county my parents would never see me again. What crime have I committed? What have I done to deserve the contempt of this House? I have discussed the financial situation and I have repelled the attacks made upon me. That is all. It is very natural too, is it not?

It appears that my speech throws some consternation into the Opposition camp. Else why did they not treat it with the supreme contempt which they affected to feel for me? When I deal with an enemy whom I despise I treat him as infinitely beneath me. Why should any one give himself the trouble to reply to one so criminal as I! It appears that I am guilty of treason! Is it towards the Queen? I have not yet been told. If I were but a miserable worthless creature I should fall beneath the weight of my own impotence.

No, you will not succeed in crushing me. The public which loves justice and fair play will range itself upon my side. It is well known that the public takes up the cause of him whom many join together to annihilate.

It is perfectly astonishing! These gentlemen first offer me a portfolio in their Government, and now find me to be

unworthy of the esteem of honest people ! How has the pure gold changed.

After the reply given me by the honorable member for Lotbinière, it seems to me that they should have been satisfied. But, no even that could not content these hateful and implacable enemies. They used heavy artillery against me, but the balls passed over my head. Then they used other means and machines to throw dirt in my face. All these gentlemen, three in member, did their work well, but it was not enough. The whole Opposition had to be let loose in the attempt to destroy and crush me. The member for St. John came to their assistance. They wish to make me celebrated ? Very well ! This evening the Leader of the Opposition was made use of.

He complains that I injured him ; now I did not utter a single unjust word that could do him harm. He asserted that the Joly Government had fallen as the result of the Legislative Council's action. I denied his statement. To prove that I was right, I referred to the Journal of the House, and when I had to repel the attacks directed against my personal conduct, I took up the speeches and writings of the honorable member for St. Hyacinthe, to prove that he also had changed parties. You, the very party who called certain Liberals " the members of the *clique*, the would be Radicals," and who fought them strenuously, are yourself doing to-day exactly as they did then. I simply recalled these facts to your mind.

The Leader of the Opposition goes to the most filthy sheets, the newspapers of my opponents, for arguments against me. I did not pursue this course towards him. I even did not make use of the arguments of his own political friends in fighting him.

The Leader of the Opposition says that I besmeared my quondam friends in order to court my former enemies. Since 1879 the newspapers of the former have teemed with slanders against me. I stood all this abuse without aveng-

ing myself and fought them fairly. My enemies, on the other hand, have always adopted an opposite course against me.

The member for St. Hyacinthe accuses me of having made secrets public. I deny this accusation in the most formal manner. I have in my hands an arm of which I could make use if I were such a man as I am falsely represented to be. A friend said to me the other day: "If I had such a weapon as that I would use it." I however refused to do so. No, Mr. Speaker, I will only fight with the weapons of justice and fairness.

As to the esteem in which I am held I leave to my friends the task of answering for it. All I know is that the Conservatives of the Province had enough confidence in me to offer me a portfolio in this Government. The Hon. Mr. Ross, who was my colleague in the Chapleau Government, had enough confidence in me to call me to new honors, and to the responsibilities of power, and to ask me to enter his Cabinet. Is not this a victorious reply to Opposition abuse? The liveliest spite shows through in their attacks.

The Leader of the Opposition has not succeeded in refuting a single statement I advanced. He has not disproved a single fact concerning his conduct.

I had intended to read articles from authentic sources which incriminate him.

Hon. Mr. MERCIER.—I defy you to do so.

Hon. Mr. FLYNN.—I accept the challenge. The last article bears the date May 26th, 1866. It contains the honorable member's farewell to journalism. I will read the following extracts:

To the readers of *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*:

"In resigning the editorship of the *Courrier*, we will take the liberty of stating that I remain sincerely and faithfully attached to the ideas which we have always professed and defended in the press and elsewhere; and that if we thought it our duty to make this unexpected retreat, we do

so rather from a want of confidence in the Leader of the Conservative party, than in the party itself, which we still believe to be prudent enough not to allow important events, upon which our destinies depend, to take place under its responsibility without itself and the country being consulted ; and national enough, not to allow its leaders to expose to danger interests as sacred as those which are to-day in jeopardy, with impunity and without protest.

" The Conservative leaders have recently counted too much upon their own strength, and not enough upon their duties as leaders and members of a nationality which they must not allow to perish ; in order to bring about the triumph of a project which has become their constant dream, they seem disposed to sacrifice everything. Ambition instead of patriotism seems to be the guide by means of which they wish to overcome the difficulties of the moment."

(Signed) HONORÉ MERCIER.
PAUL DE CAZES.

Saint Hyacinthe, May 23rd, 1866.

Here is the reply of the other contributors :

" Of what use are all their fine professions, and their sentiments of devotion, if they cannot be trusted ?

" This proves one thing, viz ; that when one has no definite opinions, and, under the pretext of not wishing to compromise himself, swims between two floods, it is better to say nothing rather than run a risk of falling into contradictions which are evident to everyone, and which are always injurious to a man's political reputation

(Signed) THE OTHER CONTRIBUTORS.

In 1872, he was elected under the auspices of the Conservatives of Rouville. In 1874, he was sent home by the same county.

The Leader of the Opposition asks me if I accept the

responsibility of all the acts of the Conservative party. I have never, so far as I know, repudiated my acts. In 1879, I simply declared that the Government was not strong enough to govern. Since then no one can find anything in my conduct incompatible with the stand I then took. I am not responsible for the party's acts except since I became a minister. I approve of the Conservative principles, and in Gaspé I never was anything but a Conservative. I have always said so too.

In 1878, I also declared that I was ready to give fair play to the Liberal Government. Had not the Joly Cabinet the support of such former Conservative as Messrs. Watts, Cameron, Turcotte, Rinfret, Price and Mercier? I could well do what they did.

Now I will mention a fact which establishes the truth of this assertion. In 1877, my opponent and myself were speaking before a great meeting in Percé. I was a candidate, and I had written out my programme, in which I said that I would offer no factious opposition to the De Boucherville Government. Hereupon some one said to me: "But you are a Conservative." "Well," I replied, "if that is to be a Conservative I am one. I am of the school of Liberals who have been allied with those under the leadership of Baldwin in Upper Canada, and of Lafontaine and Morin in Lower Canada, but never with the so called school upheld by the Dorion's, the Dessaulle's, and others."

In 1878, my manner of looking at things was constantly in conflict with the opinions of my companions. It was thus that I treat the dismissal from a different point of view from that held by other members of the Ministerial party. In the Liberal party, at the present moment, there are two shades of opinion, that of the honorable Leader of the Opposition and that of the *Rouges*. They are distinct although they meet upon a common ground, viz., war against the present Government.

I have mentioned the Letellier affair. I wish to say just one word in reply to a criticism of me made in connection with the encroachments of Federal authority upon Provincial rights. At the time I had no sacrifice to make. According to me there was an enormous difference between a political and an administrative act. This is a point that has been overlooked.

The member for Lotbinière is a type of the English Tory When he was in power he based himself upon precedents offerred by the career of Sir Robert Peel. I am not finding fault with him, but simply stating a fact. His ideas are not those of the men with whom he is in company.

In 1878 I had to accomplish one of the most solemn acts of my whole life ; I had to choose a party. I said to myself, I can never sympathize with the member for Lotbinière and his friends. On general principles we must agree. Can anyone, casting his eyes over history, say that the *Rouge* party has done good ? To this question the people have often answered in the negative. And if those who abandon them are traitors, I can say that in 1879 there were thousands of traitors in Gaspé, Levis, and elsewhere.

In 1874 the Liberals came to power thanks to the assistance of Conservatives who left their party to overthrow a Conservative Government.

Were these members insulted and vilified ? No ! My crime then was worse than theirs ! After having calumniated me, dit not *L'Electeur*, in its issue of December 14th, 1882, say that there was no difference between the member for St. Hyacinthe and Mr. Chapleau ? Moreover did not the fierce member for Lotbinière offer a portfolio in his Cabinet to Mr. Mathieu, a Conservative, and to Mr. Turcotte, another Conservative. Did not Mr. McKenzie himself take three Conservatives, Messrs. Burpee, Smith, and Cartwright, into his Government ? The corrupter is as culpable as the one who is bought, if corruption and buying takes place. I contributed to the overthrow of the Joly Government ; by

that very fact I was in honor bound not to refuse to take the responsibility of the succeeding Cabinet's administration. It was not I who laid down this constitutional doctrine. I find it clearly stated by an authority on constitutional law. Hearn in his "Government of England," Vol. II, page 219, says :

"Those persons who overthrow any administration may expect to be required by the king to assist him in the room of those officers whom in consequence of their proceedings he had displaced. Nor is a statesman who is so summoned at liberty to refuse ? He has taken upon himself the responsibility of obstructing the Government of the country. If he desires to save himself of the imputation of mere faction, he must endeavour to set up in its place a better Government. The king may fairly address the Commons in the language of the philosophic poet to his friend "*si quid novisti rectius.*"

The Leader of the Opposition has stated that I was in negotiation with Mr. Chapleau, while I had the offer of a portfolio in the Joly Government. I most emphatically and formally deny this. My honorable friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands knows when I made the acquaintance of Mr. Chapleau, and that it was not at the time at which my opponents would have you think.

The Leader of the Opposition even pried into my private life in search of arms against me, though I did not do so to him. Such action is a want of courtesy and delicacy of which I could never be guilty. I said here that I did not wish to speak either of the Terrebonne or of the Jacques-Cartier affair.

Nevertheless, that did not prevent him from lifting aside the veil which protects my private life. He has mentioned the election of 1874. I then came forward as an Independent candidate. On the very day on which I was nominated I was appointed a professor in Laval University. At the time, apart from the Opposition candidate, there was

another, Mr. Le Bouthillier. I discontinued the fight because the exercise of my professorship was not compatible with the accomplishment of my parliamentary duties if elected.

I have always been a friend to Mr. Harper, who was a candidate as well as election agent.

On Mr. Harper's side thousands of dollars were spent. In the contest before the courts Mr. Le Bouthillier did not allege corruption as a sufficient cause of the invalidation of Mr. Harper's election, but simply that Mr. Harper was both candidate and election agent. I have here the injurious article and the reply thereto. The Leader of the Opposition knew, when he quoted the *Canadien*, that this paper was then opposed to me. Why did he not say so?

During the course of the trial of the case it was seen that the inquiry could not be proceeded with because the document known as the bill of particulars had not been filed. If you read the proof, you will at once see the truth of what I state. Besides, there is nothing in all this to incriminate me anyway. The judge, later on, recognized the fact that he had made a mistake, and that according to law he could not make a report.

I furnished Mr. LeBouthillier with an account of the moneys which he had confided to me and with which he declared himself satisfied. I was not paid as has been intimated. It has even been said that I took $200! Mr. Horace LeBouthillier, who since followed me, gave splendid testimony in my behalf. What I am about to read is an extract from a magnificent speech delivered on March 17th last at Douglastown, and which well deserve publication. He said:—

"Mr. chairman and gentlemen,—When Mr. Flynn was first spoken of as a candidate for Parliament, though of acknowledged ability, but still a mere boy, I may say as regards age, I should certainly not have selected him; and, the reason why? because he was without experience. This

is not a matter acquired by birth, and therefore no fault of his. Well, in deference to my neighbours, I waived this objection and joined his colors. He was returned, served his country well, and was recompensed in consequence, by being appointed Commissioner of Crown Lands, the most important billet, I believe, in the ministry.

" He was laid aside, for a while, not through incapacity, but, as a proof that his services were indispensable, in the affairs of state, he lately becomes Commissioner of Railways; this is the position he now occupies

" You must lay aside all personal and local affairs, in order to judge the man by his public character. This I do, and hence my candid opinion is that he is an honest man, and, as you are aware, an honest man is the noblest work of God. That he has benefited by undue acquisitions, I don't believe; in fact, circumstances seem to justify my statement; for, as I happen to be acquainted with Mr. Sénécal, I am aware that he is no friend of Mr. Flynn. Therefore, gentlemen, you can draw your conclusions.

" Some people have laid great stress on what they term deserting his party. Now, gentlemen, is not the man to be commended who, recognizing his error, changes the tenor of his ways ? And more particularly, in acting so, he has his country's interest at heart; for, gentlemen, it is to my knowledge, and I defy any one to prove the contrary, that it is to the Conservative Government that Gaspé owes all that it has obtained from the public treasury. And, to give you the proof thereof, allow me to quote the words of late Honorable Mr. Letellier, the head of the Liberal party at the time: " We cannot expect to win over the county of Gaspé."

" As far as I can remember, the county has received nothing from the Liberals, but opposition ; and now, gentlemen, I shall relate a marked move of theirs against such a disadvantageously situated county like Gaspé, commercially shut out from access to the markets of the world for

seven months of the year, our export produce meanwhile deteriotaring in the stores for so long, losing interest, paying insurance, and, above all, deprived of the advantage of the foreign markets during the lenten season. That great boon, the *free port*, was the act of the Conservative Government as an encouragement to the fisheries, and which the Liberals opposed.....

" Now, gentlemen, for the main subject, the Government honored the county in the person of Mr. Flynn's appointment as commissioner, an honour sought for by many counties as well as members, and often in vain. Three of the five ministers appointed by the Crown had to have their commissions ratified by the electors of their respective constituencies ; two of them were returned by acclamation as a necessary sequel to their approval by the Crown. Gentlemen, one has been left out in the cold, as it were, and this is the junior member, one of ourselves ; true he was born in a fisherman's hut, as a scurrilous Quebec sheet would have it, if it would indeed seem to be a crime to have sprung from the best fishing grounds of the coast, the one above all. I say, that he should have been returned by acclamation at the court hall of Percé, on the 11th March instant.

" Well, gentlemen, I leave him in your hands, I commend him to your care. Treat him, ah ! treat him as you did me ! Remember that you then voted all, all as one man ! and what could I have done as a member ? comparatively nothing. I could not nor did I aspire to the position Mr. Flynn holds so honorably, not only in the eyes of the Province, but of the whole Dominion ; and, in this position of commissioner Flynn we must all rejoice, because he is one of ourselves.

"As for those Quebec city election runners who have been sent down here by their employers, with any amount of ammunition, let them fire it away to the four winds ; for otherwise, they would be doing an injustice to their em-

ployers. As regards them, I must do them the justice to say that, had they believed that they would have had to address enlightened communities, they would have stayed at home, as they did in the case of the commissioner's colleagues, and where there was no distance to travel .But I suppose they considered that "distance lends enchantment to the view."

"Ah! gentlemen, were it not for private considerations, I could tell you, not only where this more than factious opposition sprung from, but also have used a powerful lever, but I forbear being convinced that, as matters are in the end, a glorious triumph awaits the honorable commissioner and that the opposition will be ignominously defeated.

"Well, gentlemen, I shall not detain you any longer, but let me indulge the hope that an intelligent and independent parish such as I have the honor to address and with whom I have always maintained the best of relations, shall, at the polls, prove to the world that our junior minister should have been returned by acclamation."

Here is testimony which reduces these accusations to nothing.

Apart from the accusation, the Leader of the Opposition should have given the reply which I made and which closed the debate. I published a letter which gave all necessary explanations. If I did not take up the slanders of the press it was because I make a point of never instituting newspaper libel suits over my political actions. I repel the accusations and fling them, with all the scorn in my power, in the face of their authors.

The Leader of the Opposition also spoke of a letter in which it was said that it was a sin to vote for me. This letter was confidential. It was published, I know not how. In any case I wrote a letter so peremptory that the debate instantly closed.

The *Canadien* of 1882 is also quoted. This paper did not like to see me in the Government ; hence the articles published against me.

The Honorable the Prime Minister should not, it appears, have asked me to enter his Cabinet, because of the difference of opinion between us on the question of the sale of the North Shore. The same objection applies to the honorable members for Brome and Beauce. The member for St. Hyacinthe says that I renounced my principles. The Honorable Prime Minister knows how to appreciate both men and other matters. I sacrificed no principle in entering this Cabinet. During the lifetime of the Chapleau Government I had no better friend than the present Premier.

I have always felt towards him the regard which a man should have for a colleague. The Honorable Prime Minister knew both my principles and my manner of seeing things when he asked me to again become his colleague.

The Leader of the Opposition desires to revive the Molon affair. Well, the Government of which the Honorable the Commissioner of Crown Lands was a member, having seen fit to reimburse a certain sum of money paid on account of the price of lands sold to Mr. de Molon, we have nothing to do with the matter, as it belongs to the past. At the time, when the discussion took place, I declared that I had enough confidence in my honorable colleague, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, to accept his explanations.

As a matter of fact I was opposed to this reimbursement.

In so far as the de Molon transaction itself is concerned, there is nothing reprehensible about it. Everything was perfectly legal and honest. This manufacturer wished to work in the country's interests.

I have been accused of attacking my old friends. This I deny. I did no more than repel attacks made upon me.

The Honorable Leader of the Opposition attacked me in such a way that my friends were surprised at my silence. He says that I have to thank my former leader for my political career. I deny this, Mr. Speaker. He never helped me in any of my Gaspé elections, and the proof of this is

found in the fact that the same friends helped me after I became a minister as before it.

What reward did I receive after supporting this former leader for eighteen months? After I had rendered services to these former friends, how did they reward me? From that time on I have been insulted every day. Can this strange attitude, adopted from the very beginning of the session, be explained? Why discuss my actions and not the great questions of public interest? *Delenda Carthago* Flynn must be destroyed. They have not yet succeeded although they have adopted means repugnant to decency and to honesty. These attacks, inspired by hatred, will not succeed.

The Chief of the Opposition has denied nothing I have said; but has he been loyal and fair towards me? No. I never betrayed anyone's secrets, and in defending myself I have the full and entire sympathy of my ministerial friends.

In order to destroy me five of my enemies were detailed from the party. Is not one man from the Opposition able to oppose one ministerialist? No, they have to set four or five upon one. It is neither honorable to them nor to their party.

Hon. Mr. JOLY (member for Lotbinière).—Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Honorable Commissioner of Railways is trying to re-establish himself.

When my honorable friends the members for Kamouraska and Montreal West spoke, I saw him prudently disappear. That was not a mark of courage.

I have never heard so important a speech!! One so well made! Evidently the people for Gaspé do not understand his talent! That is unfortunate.

Those who hoped that the Government which I had the honor to lead would do good for the country, had a grudge against the member for Gaspé, for having extinguished the lamp just when it began to shed out its rays.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to take up a declaration made by the Commissioner of Railway. It is this.:

He told us that he had a terrible weapon to destroy us, and that he had shown it to his friends, but that, as it was a confidential letter, he did not wish to make use of it.

Hon. Mr. FLYNN.—I did not say that I had shown the letter.

Hon. Mr. JOLY.—It is impossible for us to remain under this threat. Let him show us this letter.

Hon. Mr FLYNN.—I was not speaking of the Opposition, I alluded to implacable foes outside of this House.

Hon. Mr. JOLY.—If the member for Gaspé has such a letter, let him produce it.

Hon. Mr. FLYNN.—This letter is marked "private" and refers to no member of the Opposition. No matter how urgent all demands might be I could not render a private letter public.